

Application No. 10/512,051
Amendment dated August 7, 2006
After Final Office Action of June 5, 2006

Docket No.: 2593-0150PUS1

REMARKS

Claims 11-14 and 16-18 remain present in this application.

Claim 11 has been amended and claims 15 and 19-26 have been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer of the subject matter contained therein.

Rejections under 35 USC 102 and 103

Claims 11-13 and 15-18 stand rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by Maeng, U.S. Patent 6,563,331. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 14 stands rejected under 35 USC 103 as being unpatentable over Maeng in view of Kim et al., U.S. Patent 6,518,745. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

First, with regard to the 35 USC 102(e) rejection, it is noted that the Maeng patent issued on May 13, 2003, and that the filing date of the present application is April 25, 2002. Accordingly, Maeng does not qualify as prior art under 35 USC 102(b), and it is believed that the Examiner intended to give a rejection under 35 USC 102(e).

Irregardless, independent claim 1 of the present application sets forth, "at least one moving means capable of simultaneously gripping a plurality of said strip formats at a loading position of pre-test electronic devices, while conveying said gripped strip formats to said contact portions without reloading said electronic devices from said strip formats, and while pressing input/output terminals of said electronic devices against said contact portions at the same time said electronic devices are being loaded on said strip formats." Accordingly, the moving means simultaneously 1) grips the strip format, 2) conveys the strip format to the contact portion, and 3) presses the electronic devices against the contact on the test head.

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On the contrary, in Maeng, new trays 10a are loaded onto the rail 38 from the transferring member 40 by the loader 34. Next, each new tray 10a moves along the rail 38 (see column 8, lines 35-37). In other words, moving means sequentially - but not simultaneously - grip and convey each tray 10a.

Due to this difference, setting IC devices on the contact portions of Maeng takes longer than in the present application.

Also, the patent to Maeng is related to a burn-in apparatus, whereas the present invention is related to a testing apparatus. Burning-in involves subjecting a device being manufactured to certain stresses more severe than those which would be encountered during actual use, thereby causing defects to surface. Burning-in is therefore a screening process, in which 8 hours or longer can be spent screening the IC devices. The setting time for Maeng is therefore shorter than the actual screening time, whereby the apparatus of Maeng would not permit the simultaneous gripping and conveying of each tray 10a, as can be found in the present application. Again, the apparatus of Maeng handles each step one at a time, and simultaneously.

On the other hand, the testing apparatus of the present invention tests the electrical characteristics of IC devices, and therefore usually spends only a few minutes performing the testing process. For this reason, the ratio of the setting time to testing time is large, whereby the setting time has an effect on the throughput of the testing apparatus.

It is again therefore respectfully submitted that the moving means [40, 34, 36] of Maeng does not simultaneously grip a plurality of strip formats at a loading position and convey the gripped strip formats, as is found in the present application. The secondary reference to Kim et al. fails to overcome this deficiency.

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Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that the prior art utilized by the Examiner fails to teach or suggest the apparatus of independent claim 11 and its dependent claims. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the 35 USC 102 and 103 rejections are therefore respectfully requested.

Conclusion

Favorable reconsideration and an early Notice of Allowance are earnestly solicited.

In the event the Examiner does not consider this application to be in condition for allowance, it is respectfully requested that this Amendment be entered for the purposes of Appeal. This Amendment should overcome the current grounds of rejection and therefore simplify the issues for Appeal. Nonetheless, it should be unnecessary to proceed to Appeal because the instant application should now be in condition for allowance.

In the event that any outstanding matters remain in this application, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at (703) 205-8000 in the Washington, D.C. area.

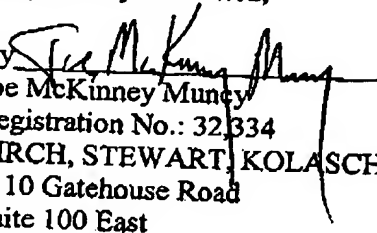
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If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Dated: August 7, 2006

Respectfully submitted,

By 
Joe McKinney Muncy
Registration No.: 32,334
BIRCH, STEWART, KOLASCH & BIRCH, LLP
8110 Gatehouse Road
Suite 100 East
P.O. Box 747
Falls Church, Virginia 22040-0747
(703) 205-8000
Attorney for Applicant